Factors responsible for coal mine disaster

1157. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that different factors responsible for most of the coal mines disasters have come to the fore during the recent mishaps in the BCCL coal mines in Bihar; and

(b) if so, what are those factors and what steps have been taken to remove them in order to prevent recurrence of any such coal mines accidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) and (b) The causes and circumstances of the Bagdigi accident will be known only when the enquiry into the accident is completed.

Updating of Mining Maps

1158. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that mining maps are not regularly updated;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Prior approval of the Director General of Mines Safety was taken before mining so far as Bagdigi is concerned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAN):

(a) and (b) It has been reported by Coal India Ltd. that mine plans are updated quarterly as per statute.

(c) Yes, Sir. Prior approval had been taken from Director General Mines safety for mining work of Bagdigi Colliery.

Legislation for safety in coal mines

1159. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Government sponsored report on coal sector has suggested enactment of a new legislation for dealing with safety in coal mines;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government propose to bring a new legislation for safety in coal mines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) to (c) The Central Government with an IDA credit, had engaged the Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI) India and The International Mining Consultants Limited (IMCL) U.K. jointly to study the regulatory frame work of the coal industry in India and make recommendations for improving the domestic regulatory frameworks to promote international best practices in the sector. The report submitted by the consultants covered all the areas in the coal mining sector including safety, wherein the following recommendations were made in regard to enactment of a legislation for dealing with safety in coal mines:—

(i) A new Mines Act be drafted to incorporate "Duty of Care" principles in respect of "Employer, Employee" and "Manufacturer / Supplier" of a plant / machinery / equipment etc. in a mine so that the responsibility of conducting operations in the mine safely rests squarely on the Employer (with mandatory inputs and assistance from the employees and manufacturer/supplier of a plant/machinery/equipment, etc. in a mine).

(ii) A reassessment of safety policies be undertaken and that new policies and legislation be formulated with a time bound strategy for reduction of accidents and fatalities in coal mines.

(iii) The Mines Act should be redrafted and so rewritten that it imposes total responsibility of operation, safety and health onto the management with minimum regulation and control by the enforcing agencies. It should provide more flexibility to the owner and the manager in managing the mine. This will not only increase efficiency of management but also improve safety status.

Dismissal of tribal workers from Western Coalfields

†1160. SHRI KAILASH JOSHI: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Western Coalfields Limited in the district of Betul in Madhya Pradesh is operating nine coal mines where tribal workers have been and are being dismissed from their job by charging them with the allegation of absence;

(b) if so, the total number of persons working in these nine coal mines (mine-wise) and the year-wise and category-wise number of employees dismissed in the last five years; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.